MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING DURING INFANT PAIN REGULATION FROM IMMUNIZATION: ESTABLISHING THE PRELIMINARY PSYCHOMETRICS OF THE OUCH-IE

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INTRODUCTION / AIM

The immunization context is an ideal environment to screen for infant mental health. This is based on the broadly accepted tenet that how a parent supports an infant’s regulation from distressing events, such as pain, is a foundational pillar of future physical and mental health. Our goal was to establish the preliminary psychometrics of an infant mental health screening tool for use in pediatric primary care that focuses on insensitive caregiver behaviours and poor scaffolding of pain regulation.

METHODS

Based on observations of over 2000 immunizations from the OUCH cohort (760 infants followed between 2 months and 5 years), the Opportunities to Understand Childhood Hurt - Immunization Evaluation (OUCH-IE) includes 11 suboptimal caregiver behaviours seen in the immunization setting (e.g., dressing a child that is in high distress). Twelve-month immunization video footage (n = 283) was coded using the OUCH-IE by one graduate student coder and one research assistant coder. Caregiver-infant dyads were considered at risk for mental health challenge if three or more insensitive behaviours were present.

RESULTS

The OUCH-IE showed strong interrater reliability (r = .92) between two trained coders. Across a number of outcomes related to risk for mental health challenge (e.g., low maternal sensitivity, poor negative affect regulation, difficult temperament), sensitivity and specificity were acceptable to strong.

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS

Within a pain context, the OUCH-IE holds the promise to efficiently and universally screen infant mental health risk, with the potential for integration into primary care.

OTHER AUTHORS

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